

**UNAPPROVED M I N U T E S**  
**UTAH SOIL CONSERVATION COMMISSION (USCC) MEETING**  
[First hour joint meeting with the Utah Water Quality Board]  
September 23, 2002  
Vernal, Utah

**ATTENDANCE**

**Chairman (Ex-officio):**

Cary G. Peterson, *Commissioner, Utah Department of Agriculture and Food*

**Appointed Soil Conservation District (SCD)**

**Supervisor Members:**

Larry Johnson, *Zone 1*  
Dee Waldron, *Zone 2*  
Richard L. Saunders, *Zone 3*  
Stanley Wood, *Zone 4*  
Allen Henrie, *Acting for Ralph Staheli, Zone 5*  
Willard "Bill" Rasmussen, *Zone 6*  
Robert Berry, *Acting for Lyle Bryner, Zone 7*

**Standing Ex-Officio Members:**

Randy Greenhalgh, *President, Utah Association of Conservation Districts (UACD)*  
Sherman Hoskins, *Deputy Director, Utah Dept. Natural Resources*  
Dr. Phillip Rasmussen, *UT State University Extension (USU)*  
Mike Reichert *for Don Ostler, Water Quality Division (WQD), Utah Department of Environmental Quality (UDEQ)*

**Appointed Alternate SCD Supervisor**

**Members:**

Hylton Haueter, *Zone 3*  
Edward Bench Jr, *Zone 6*

**Conservation Partners Representatives:**

Phillip "Skip" Nelson, *State Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service-Utah (NRCS-UT), USDA*  
Gordon Younker, *Executive Vice President UACD*  
Kate Kitchell, *USDI Bureau of Land Management (BLM)*  
A. J. Martinez, *BLM*  
Janice Richardson, *USDI Bureau of Reclamation*  
Penny Trinca, *Zone 1 Coordinator, UACD*  
Ken Mills, *Zone 2 Coordinator, UACD*  
Ray Loveless, *Zone 3 Coordinator, UACD*  
David Pace, *Zone 4 Coordinator, UACD*  
Tyce Palmer, *Zone 5 Coordinator, UACD*  
Hal Lemon, *Zone 7 Coordinator, UACD*  
Kevin Creer, *Bridging-the-Headgate Specialist, UACD*  
Rand Fisher, *Utah Dept. of Environmental Quality*  
Dr. Jack Payne, *VP & Dean of Extension, USU*  
Chuck Gay, *Extension Specialist, USU*

**Commission Staff Support from the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food:**

K. N. "Jake" Jacobson, *USCC Admin. Officer, M&CD*  
Sherie Edginton, *USCC Secretary, M&CD*  
Koy Page, *Ag Loan Administrator, Agricultural Loans Section, M&CD*  
Dick Sandberg, *Loan Specialist, Agricultural Loans Section, M&CD*  
George Hopkin, *Chief Environmental Quality, M&CD*  
Roy Gunnell, *Environmental Scientist, M&CD*

**Guests:**

Steve Cox, *USU Extension, Wasatch County*  
Randy Julander, *Snow Survey, NRCS*  
Val Warnick, *UACD Zone 3, Heber City*  
Nathan Daus, *UACD Zone 3*  
Karl Kler, *Asst. State Conservationist, NRCS*  
George S. Burbidge, *Weber Co. Stormwater Mngmnt*  
Jeff Williams, *Bonneville RC&D, NRCS*  
Kenneth Short, *Division of Water Resources, Utah Dept. of Natural Resources*  
Tony Willardson, *Western States Water Council*

## SUMMARY OF COMMISSION ACTIONS

1. The Minutes of the June 5, 2002 USCC meeting approved . Page 1
2. Young Resources Limited Partnership loan application & approval. Page 3
3. Refund of Fees on Robert and Joseph Yardley ARDL loan approved . Page 3
4. 2003 Conservation Field Day to be held in Duchesne County SCD approved Page 3
5. The Priorities for the FY2004 Budget Request, to have budget cuts restored. Page 3
6. The SERA Policy Change to keep surplus Reserve allocation in the Zones and to increase mileage reimbursement to .365 cents approved. Page 3

## CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME

[See separate minutes for the joint meeting with the Utah Water Quality Board, which began at 1:00 PM and adjourned at 2:15 PM.]

Commissioner Peterson called the USCC meeting to order at 2:25 P.M. Boyd Critchfield and Joe Hill, representatives of USDA Farm Services Agency/UT State Committee, were excused because they are attending training on the new Federal Farm Bill implementation. Ben Thurgood, Ralph Staheli and Lyle Bryner were also excused. He introduced Nathan Daus as a new employee for UACD recently hired to work in Zone 3 as a project technician.

## APPROVAL OF JUNE MEETING MINUTES

Commissioner Peterson asked if there were any corrections or additions to the June meeting minutes distributed with the meeting notice. **The motion was made by Mr. Richard Saunders to approve the June meeting minutes as distributed. Seconded by Dr. Phil Rasmussen. It passed by unanimous by voice vote.**

## ISSUE UPDATE: *Future Drought Preparations in Utah.*

### CURRENT WATER CONDITIONS & 2003 PROSPECTS

Mr. Randy Julander, NRCS-Utah Snow Survey Program, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the current statewide drought conditions. Precipitation for the Virgin River Area in August was 8% of normal. The Monticello-Moab region had half it's normal August precipitation. Usually Southern Utah will have more precipitation than Northern Utah during August. The state-wide soil moisture deficits in August indicated that we needed 3-5 inches of moisture to bring soil moisture back to a hydrological responsive state. Which means we would get a minimum loss of snow pack the following spring after the soil moisture balance is restored. The storms in early September helped soil moisture. Last spring Utah lost 5-10" of snow pack to soil moisture, which made spring runoff between 10 to 40% of normal.

Mr. Julander reported that the state's reservoirs water storage have been seriously depleted. Some smaller reservoirs in northern Utah like Woodruff Creek were almost empty by mid-July. Bear Lake is at its lowest level since 1993. In Weber most of the reservoirs are at almost record level lows. Jordanella and Strawberry reservoir are at normal levels because they were designed to run on a 4-year cycle were most run on 2-year cycles. The rest of the reservoirs in the Provo system are at record lows. In the Uintah Basin, Starvation reservoir is at 55% of normal. Steinaker is empty except for the conservation pool. In southeastern Utah the reservoirs are severely depleted, but none of them are at record lows. In the Sevier River area most of the reservoirs are almost empty. In southern Utah, Enterprise reservoir is empty, the rest are well below normal.

Mr. Julander indicated that non-irrigated vegetation stress is extremely high. Because of the drought there is an explosion in the Spruce bug worm and Pine Bark Beetles, which has killed off huge amounts of coniferous forest. There is a high mortality rate in brush and grass species.

Weather indicator suggest that January and February temperatures will be higher than normal, which suggest that this winter will be warmer.

#### PLANNING BY UTAH DROUGHT COMMITTEE

Mr. Ken Short with the Department of Natural Resources, Water Resources Division, reported Utah's Drought Committee's plan is a drought response plan, not a preparedness plan. At the beginning of drought situation the water supply subcommittee meets to evaluate supply conditions, then they report to the State Drought Coordinator, which is the director of Natural Resources. As the state moves into phase 1 drought conditions, a drought review and reporting subcommittee, made up of representatives from economic, tourism, municipal water, agriculture and wildlife resources. As the drought continues the state moves into Phase 3 which activates the drought response committee. The drought response committee keeps the governors office informed so he knows the best time to sign the declaration of drought so producers will have access to Federal funds. The different phases are determined by the water supply index, which is how much water is in the reservoirs and stream flow.

#### NATIONAL DROUGHT PREPAREDNESS ACT

Mr. Tony Wallardson reported that the western governors organized the Western States Water Council in 1965 which represents 18 western states in coalition with the Western Governors Association. In 1986 the council prepared a report showing the number of states that had drought preparedness plans. Then there were only 2, now most of the western states have plans. The National Drought Policy Act of 1998 created a national policy council, and is made up of several federal agencies. 2002 legislation has been introduced in both the house and senate to establish a permanent National Drought council. This council would be responsible for developing a national response plan and evaluating the drought programs for the different Federal agencies to make them consistent.

#### BLM DROUGHT ASSESSEMENT & MITIGATION PROJECT

Mr. A. J. Martinez reported that an interagency team was recently formed to survey drought conditions and create some early prevention plans. The committee toured the southern region of the state to see the drought results first hand. The findings of the committee were that vegetation is severely stressed, along with deer herds. He reported that there was good communication between land users and Federal agencies. There is a conflict in the allocation of consumptive resources between deer, elk, cattle herds and wild horse herds. The team will be meeting in the near future to develop a drought plan.

Ms. Kate Kitchell, Deputy State Director, commented that BLM hopes this will be a cooperative effort between everyone who is effected by a drought to better access, monitor, mitigate, respond and recover from the drought.

### **AGRICULTURE RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT LOAN (ARDL) PROGRAM**

#### LOAN, REPAYMENT & ZONE ALLOCATION STATUS UPDATE

Mr. Richard Sandberg gave the ARDL program funds report. The total Legislative appropriation to date is \$20,473,418.83. The principal balance of loans is \$21,460,460.00 with \$1,815,783 in undisbursed funds, totaling \$23,276,197.00. The total number of loans is 983 (864 contracted, 119 pending). The current overall average loan size is \$39,550.00. Total principal repayments for FY2002 was \$3,274,216.00, for FY03 this far is \$127,432.00. Interest payments for FY02 are \$578,908.00 and for FY03 to date is \$17,643.00. Penalty payments for FY02 totaling \$16,685.00, FY03 \$1298.00. Total payments received FY02 are \$3,869,809.00, FY03 \$182,373.00. In FY02 there were 93 loans paid off and so far in FY03 there has been 7. In FY02 there were 113 totaling \$6,146,906.00 and FY03 \$407,096.00. The average size on new loans for FY02 was \$54,397.00, FY03 it is \$31,311.00.

There was one loan that was presented to the Commission for their consideration. It is from Young Resources Limited Partnership, John H. and Charles M Young. The loan amount is \$140,400.00 with an existing loan balance of \$54,069.00, totaling \$194,469. The purpose for the loan is to finance a large private grazingland improvement project including a well, pump, pipelines, fencing and livestock watering troughs in the Pocatello Valley, Box Elder County. Security is first trust deed with subordination by Western Ag Credit on approximately 4,500 acres of rangeland. The applicants run a successful sheep business. The improvements will permit the land to be used for both lambing and cattle grazing. A lucrative contract has been made with a large cattle operation to provide grazing for 1,000 cattle on the property. This provides a readily identifiable repayment source. **A motion was made to approve the loan application by Mr. Randy Greenhalgh; Seconded by Mr. Bill Rasmussen, The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.**

A loan in the amount of \$149,878.00 (including the \$5,765.00 4% administrative fee) was closed October 3, 2001 to Robert and Joseph Yardley for the purpose of financing a pipeline and three center pivot sprinklers. The local SCD board encouraged them to apply for the large loan although they planned to install the equipment over several years. Due to drought conditions, the additional pivots are not feasible at this time. Well development will probably be needed to continue with the project. The loan has now been partially disbursed (a total of \$47,113.00). This includes the full amount of the fee. Only \$41,348.00 has been used on the project. A fee of \$1,654.00 would be appropriate for the amount. The difference, which has been requested for refund is \$4,111.00. It is recommended by the local SCD that the Commission approve a refund as presented based on the policy which permits such a refund under Part 12.F. 3 "The Commission retains the prerogative to make exceptions for cases deemed to be extraordinary."

The fee is paid to UACD and they would be the ones refunding the \$4,111.00. **A motion was made to approve the refund in the above amount by Mr. Robert Barry, acting for Lyle Bryner; Seconded by Mr. Larry Johnson. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.**

Mr. Sandberg also mentioned that Ms. Marti LeNoir the accounting technician with UDAF's Ag Loans Section is retiring from her position in October. Ms. Chris Allen has been hired to replace Marti.

#### **USCC, SCD, UACD & UPC&D ITEMS**

##### **2002 UTAH CONSERVATION FIELD DAY REPORT**

Mr. Hylton Haueter reported on the success of the Utah Conservation Field Day held in Heber City June 5, 2002 and he thanked the people who helped out. The night before a Dutch oven dinner was served, and the next day there was a breakfast served before a bus tour. The tour included irrigation pump stations and ponds, the Provo restoration project, Wasatch Mountain golf course, finishing with Soldier Hollow. Lunch was served at John Besendorfers barn and antique farm equipment museum.

##### **FUTURE OF ANNUAL UTAH CONSERVATION FIELD DAY**

Mr. Edward Bench invited the Commission to Duchesne County SCD for the 2003 Conservation Field Day. **A motion was made to approve Duchesne County as the location by Mr. Bill Rasmussen; Seconded by Mr. Bill Rasmussen. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.**

##### **FY2004 USCC BUDGET REQUEST STATUS THRU UDAF & SERA POLICY AMENDMENT**

Mr. Jake Jacobson distributed a form showing the current USCC FY03 budget, which included the legislative budget cut made in February, and the back showed an estimated FY04 budget needs. Jake reported that the Governor's office requests that each department show any increase needs for the FY04 budget in the current budget request process. He indicated that in the past the Commission has prioritized any increased needs, which would be proposed through the Governor's budget request process at the next legislative session. Mr. Randy Greenhalgh proposed that the only priority be the Commission go back to the higher budget base from past years before recent cuts for the Commission & districts, and not stay at the reduced amount now in the FY03 budget, if possible. **A motion was made by Mr. Richard Saunders to except the FY04 priorities as set by the SCD's two-year needs and to ask to have the budget cuts be restored; Seconded by Mr. Randy Greenhalgh. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.**

Mr. Jacobson presented some proposed new wording to the SCD Supervisors Expense Reimbursement Account (SERA) policy. He pointed out that the current policy was revised in the 6/5/02 USCC meeting that wherein surplus SCD Reserve amounts would be used within the Zones before being distributed state-wide, but only for FY02. There were several editorial corrections proposed to bring the policy up to date, and to increase the amount paid for mileage for private vehicle use to .365 cents per mile, which is current state rates. **Mr. Randy Greenhalgh made a motion to amend the SERA policy as follows. 1) Remove the FY02 reference on the surplus Reserve amount language changed last meeting so that process would be followed each succeeding fiscal year. 2) Accept the proposed editorial changes. And, 3) increase mileage rate to .365 cents. Mr. Richard Saunders seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.**

Mr. Jacobson indicated that the editorial changes included continuing the procedure used over the past two fiscal years (FY) for allocating and approving out-of-state travel allotments for SCD Supervisors. He suggested that starting in FY 2004 there be an emphasis placed in this process encouraging the SCDs to prioritize funding travel for new Supervisors to attend NACD out of state conferences. This would include having the ZEC's meet to decide who would be going from each Zone, then accumulate the SCD funds together to pay for all of that Supervisors travels if possible. The Commission asked that a draft of this proposed adjustment to the out of state allocation procedure be written and presented at the next meeting.

### CONSERVATION PARTNER'S UPDATE

#### SCD/ZONE 2 & 7

Mr. Ken Mills and Mr. Hal Lemon distributed a handout summarizing activities in Zone's 2 and 7. Mr. Bob Barry handed out an announcement and invited everyone to the Ranchers Survival Seminar at the Red Cliffs Center, in Moab December 14, 2002.

#### UTAH DEPT. OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY (UDEQ)

Mr. Mike Reichert reported EPA headquarters is drafting new AFO/CAFO rules. The UDEQ is working with 70 new community's storm water programs to keep the Phase 2 storm water rule. They will be required to implement these programs.

#### UTAH DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Sherman Hoskins reported that this was the worst year in recent history for wildfire on state owned lands. Not because of acreage lost, but in total dollars spent by the state. The state has expended \$4.3 million dollars fighting fires. They will be asking for \$4.12 million for the next state budget. One of the major impacts of these fires is the soil erosion. One example is in the recent Sanatquin floods from past wildfires, it was calculated that 12.4-acre feet of soil came down with the mudslide. Grazing for wildlife and livestock will be impacted not just this year but also in the future. The state has started a program to interface with communities and ranches to stop wild land fires crossing over into towns and ranches and farms. This summer's controlled fire restrictions, such as for campfires etc, have been lifted as of September 19 on public lands.

The Division of Water Resources is updating the Bear River management plan, and will start on the Weber River plan next. The 1/16-cent state sales tax, which goes for water resources infrastructure development & improvement, is being used for budget shortfalls for FY 2003. This has been the major new funds source for the Division's Water Development fund. It also funds projects in DEQ and ARDL program. Some in the legislature are adamant that this funding source be maintained for these purposes and not diverted to other uses as some are advocating.

The Division of Wildlife Resources is reporting that due to the drought, birth and survival rates of new borns are down in most wildlife species. In some parts of the state Antelope herd births are down 60%, elk are down 10%. Ranchers and farmer are feeling the effect of greater wildlife depredation because wildlife is going to their fields where, in many areas, is the only available place where forage can be found. To help the situation, some areas have increased the number of wildlife take-permits.

## USDA NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS)

Mr. Skip Nelson reported that Federal drought relief dollars are available to Utah farmers and ranchers through several USDA programs. These funds will be administered & distributed by FSA.

The new USDA NRCS Chief, Bruce Knight, is now on board and very involved. Pearlie Reed, the past Chief, is now the NRCS Western Regional Conservationist.

## USDI BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Ms. Kate Kitchell reported that the fire risk was very high this past summer, however BLM lands were not effected as bad as predicted. There were two large fires mostly on BLM lands, one in the Book Cliffs, and the other by Cedar City. It is BLM's policy to rehabilitate the effected areas, but seed supplies are short. She would like to see a more reliable long-term seed supply developed.

There are new multi-agency wild lands/urban interface programs being implemented to reduce fire risks to communities. One is a granting program to help rural fire departments better prepare themselves to protect their communities. The other has \$4 million dollars to grant for specific fuel reduction on private and state lands.

BLM is continuing to renew livestock grazing permits, even though they are receiving increasing scrutiny from environmental groups. There has been a lawsuit issued against BLM on 170 permit. BLM is defending those permits in federal court. There is a program in place to continue to authorize those grazing permits under the appropriations rider. Mr. Jim Bowns, Cedar City, will be working on contract with BLM on the rangeland-monitoring program to help defend BLM's grazing permit process in court.

BLM continues to be involved in, and supportive of, the Rich County Coordinated Resource Management Planning process and the Utah Grazingland Network.

## TIMELY OR URGENT ITEMS FROM OTHER PARTNERS

Mr. Jack Payne, USU Extension Director, reported that the new interactive plant handbook is now on their web site.

Ms. Janice Richardson, USDI BOR, reported that the Bridging the Headgate five-year report is available on the reference table here at this meeting or by contacting her.

## CALENDAR OF FUTURE EVENTS

Next two SCC Meetings: Nov 6 at Provo & Jan 2003 (Date & location to be determined by SCC in Nov 2002 meeting.) 2002 UACD Annual Convention, Nov 7-8, 2002 at Provo

## ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:15 PM.

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**Sherie Edginton, Soil Conservation Program Secretary**

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**K.N. "Jake" Jacobson, USCC Administrative Officer**